



Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion Centre canadien pour la diversité et l'inclusion

Inclusive Leadership Guide (2/3):

Leading inclusively during this pandemic

Now more than ever, we need our leaders to act inclusively when managing teams. In 2016, Deloitte University Press published *The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership: Thriving in a Diverse New World* (<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/six-signature-traits-of-inclusive-leadership.html>).

The report identifies six key areas that define an inclusive leader. Many of these traits must be cultivated over time – very few people possess all of them near the beginning of their diversity and inclusion journey. But have no fear, developing and more consistently applying these traits in your everyday interactions, is possible. This Tip Sheet focuses on two of those traits and provides recommendations for bringing the trait to life in your day to day activities.

Curiosity

Curiosity: An important aspect of inclusion and diversity, Curiosity is having the ability to find out what you may not know, and have conversations with others to gain insights which might otherwise remain hidden. It is not acceptable in today's organizational climate to remain stagnant. To innovate, there must be an open attitude towards change. Otherwise, there is the risk of getting left behind and eventually becoming obsolete

How to action this trait:

- » **Practice curiosity:** Being curious is an active behaviour. It takes a willingness to put aside your own interests and beliefs, and listen to others. Now is an excellent time to hone this skill as it will allow you an opportunity to further strengthen relationships with your team. Actively seek the perspectives of others – particularly from those that aren't usually part of your circle of influence. Ask for their thoughts and withhold your immediate reaction – no idea is a bad idea; some are just more actionable than others
- » **Change perspectives:** Be willing to see things from another person's perspective. It doesn't discount your perspective to be willing to see a situation from another point of view.
- » **Embrace the uncertainty:** There has never been a more uncertain time. People need to see their leaders doing more than coping with the uncertainty, but embracing it. Now is a time to demonstrate and encourage divergent thinking and lean into ambiguity.



Courage

Courage: Courage is required to challenge the status quo and promote diversity and inclusion. If embedded policies, structures, and practices promote the existence of power structures which oppose diversity and inclusion, then inclusive leaders speak up and challenge them. Failed attempts at changing the status quo should be thought of as an opportunity to reflect on changes needed to include more diversity and inclusion within the organization.

How to action this trait:

- » **Reflect:** We all have bias and knowing about your own biases is critically important for an inclusive leader. Reflect on your unconscious bias and continue to work to understand how it impacts you in your role, team, and organization. You can use a bias test, such as the Harvard Implicit Associate Test (<https://implicit.harvard.edu>) to help identify those biases and start to think of ways you can move those biases from the unconscious to the conscious.
- » **Be open and honest:** Acknowledge that there are days when it is tough for you. Don't try and pretend that everything is ok when it's not. That openness will remind your colleagues that you are going through the same situation as they are. Be willing to admit when you're wrong and when you don't have all the answers. Share your own stories which helps to foster transparency, candor and empathy.
- » **Speak up:** Don't be a passive bystander. When intolerant language is being used, speak up and stand up for your team.
- » **Empathize:** Understand that this is a challenging time for everyone and it's important to empathize with people.
- » **Be humble:** The most important aspect of courage is the ability to acknowledge your mistakes; apologize and move forward. Admitting you don't know everything and that you may not know what to do is demonstrating humility. That's a courageous thing to do!

Other reading on...

Curiosity:

- » Five Ways to Cultivate Curiosity and Tap Into Your Creativity, Josh Ritchie, Forbes 2017 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2017/11/15/five-ways-to-cultivate-curiosity-and-tap-into-your-creativity/#1a272f7b1fd6>

Ambiguity:

- » How to Deal with Ambiguity: Guidelines and Resources, Cater McNamara, Free Management Library, <https://managementhelp.org/personaldevelopment/thinking/dealing-with-ambiguity.htm#strategies>

Bravery:

- » 10 Ways to 'Find Brave': How to rise up, speak up and stand up boldly for yourself, Forbes 2016 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kathycaprino/2016/06/15/10-ways-to-brave-up-how-to-rise-up-speak-up-and-stand-up-boldly-for-yourself/#63dfa8561093>